

VDFP LOGBOOK

Virginia Department of Fire Programs Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 1

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From the Executive Director

Welcome to January and a brand new year! I am so proud to be a part of the team at VDFP. Our agency was formed 24 years ago, and we are still making progress and developing into a stronger and more diversified service agency. Since the beginning, major steps have been taken to improve fire and emergency services in Virginia. This past year provides some highlights of forward progress at VDFP.

Our agency provided guidance in the adoption of Executive Order 102, addressing the National Incident Management System (NIMS), which was signed by Governor Warner on November 1, 2005. In this document, VDFP was charged with the lead coordination of accreditation under the National Board of Fire Service Professional Qualifications (NBFSPQ) for 21 of our training courses. In December, VDFP was reviewed by the American Council on Education (ACE) and 20 of our courses received ACE accreditation for a total of 52 college credit hours that are transferable to many colleges and universities. These agency achievements complement the fire and emergency services higher education initiative that finally produced a standardized Fire Science Technology (FST) curriculum for Virginia, which passed with a unanimous vote of the focus group on December 16, 2005. That focus group included members of our fire service stakeholder groups and the colleges that offer fire and emergency service training.

Other recent achievements in 2005 include the disbursement of millions of dollars in Aid-to-Localities funding, a steady increase in funded training classes, an improved Virginia Fire Service Needs Assessment, and a more efficient administration of the burn building grant program, in concert with the Virginia Fire Services Board.

Our fast-paced forward movement is possible because of a dedicated and tireless staff that has grown over the last couple of years to 56 employees statewide. Our progress is also possible because of a strong and trusting relationship with our Virginia Fire Services Board, continued input from our stakeholders, and support from our government officials. All of these components are vital to our agency as we enter what promises to be an exciting and productive 2006.

As we embark on this new year, our main goal is to find ways for all fire and emergency services personnel to have the opportunity to gain the funding, training, public education, and operational support they need to better serve the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Virginia Fire Services Board and VDFP are continuously looking at new and improved ways to raise the level of fire and emergency service delivery to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

We will continue our high energy momentum into this year and beyond. Our agency looks forward to working closely with all of you to accomplish your fire and rescue goals. Please contact us if we can be of assistance and don't forget to frequently visit our website for the latest VDFP news, events, and training opportunities.

Sincerely,



Aubrey W. "Buddy" Hyde, Jr.
buddy.hyde@vdfp.virginia.gov

Bristol event helps public avoid being burned

By Daniel Taylor
Bristol Herald Courier
November 13, 2005

BRISTOL, Va. – Members of the Clinchco Volunteer Fire Department drove nearly two hours Saturday to get to the Bristol Mall.

They left with boxes full of smoke detectors.

"We're going to go around to the elderly in the area and install these for them," said Jeff Taylor, a member of the group from the small community not far from the Kentucky line.

They weren't the only volunteer firefighters to show up for the Be Fire Safe Virginia event, sponsored by the state Department of Fire Programs.

Some 20 departments from across Southwest Virginia – some from nearly 100 miles away – showed up on the mall parking lot for public fire safety demonstrations and free smoke detectors.

City Fire Marshal Eric Blevins stressed the importance of installing smoke detectors. The state provided about 1,000 of them for local firefighters, many of them volunteers.



Residents were also able to pick up free smoke detector batteries.

"Most of the fire fatalities take place because there's nothing there to alarm you," Blevins said. "We want them up in people's houses that don't have them."

With home heating costs rising in the area and more people switching to portable heaters and other heat sources, firefighters say it's especially important for people to be reminded of fire safety this fall and winter.

"Anytime you open it up to more types of heating, that's worrying," Blevins said.

Saturday's sunny weather helped boost turnout, which Blevins estimated at around 500.

Kids had plenty to do at the event. They toured fire trucks, saw mascots and learned how to use fire extinguishers.

"We came last year," said Eddie McGuire, who brought his grandson, 6-year-old Will Hardman. "He had such a good time. He just loves to come down here and see all the fire trucks."

Steven Shelley of the Virginia Department of Forestry brought along a trailer with a television playing old Smokey the Bear public service announcements. The dry weather has created wildfire risks all across the area, he said.

"The biggest thing is with the dry conditions right now, we're encouraging people to be very careful with fires and even to avoid them altogether," Shelley said.

People have been taking an interest in keeping their homes fire-safe, said Blevins, the city fire marshal. "I get questions about home heating, whether they need a carbon monoxide detector, things like that," he said.

Blevins said he hopes events like these will help people stay safe during the holidays.

"If we don't get the message out now, people are going to become less likely to go out in the cold to check that chimney," he said.

Lights, Camera, Action!

State Fire Prevention Leaders Promote Home Heating Safety

The Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office, the Virginia Department of Fire Programs and the Virginia Fire Prevention Association launched a statewide public safety campaign November 17 to promote home heating safety this winter. The campaign included a home heating safety demonstration for media, television Public Service Announcements, and home heating safety tips that will be shown in approximately 280 movie theatres across the state starting November 25.

State Fire Prevention leaders, including Ed Altizer, Virginia State Fire Marshal, Aubrey W. "Buddy" Hyde, Jr., VDFP Executive Director, and Judson Flournoy, president of the Virginia Fire Prevention Association, took time from their busy schedules to participate in the filming of a 30-second Public Service Announcement on home heating fire safety. The already completed PSA has been combined onto a tape with two existing public service announcements on holiday fire safety and the importance of smoke alarms. Those tapes were sent to television stations throughout Virginia in early December.

"As cold weather approaches and heating costs increase, we anticipate many Virginians will seek alternate ways to heat their homes this winter," said Ed Altizer, Virginia State Fire Marshal. "We are providing home heating safety tips to prevent fires, injuries, and deaths caused by the improper use of heating devices."

Additionally, while the cameras were rolling, several volunteers from local departments lent their expertise and smiling faces for additional footage that will be used to produce a short video on winter fire safety. When completed the video will be made available to departments throughout the Commonwealth.

Copies of VDFP fire safety PSAs are available in both Beta SP and CD versions. Contact Mark Buff at mark.buff@vdfp.virginia.gov if you need a copy for local use. You may also view the Holiday Fire Safety and Public Assembly Safety PSAs at the VDFP website. In your internet browser just type <http://www.vafire.com/befiresafevideos.htm> to go directly to the PSAs.



Local Fire Marshals and State Fire Prevention Leaders wait for their cue during filming of the Home Heating Safety video. Front row: Robby Dawson, Kenny Dunn, Russ Acors. Back row: Aubrey W. "Buddy" Hyde, Judson Flournoy, Ed Altizer.



Who killed S

Law Enforcement School for Fire Ma

There are a few things you should know about Sheila Curling. She was young and attractive, only 35. She was married, with two small children, a daughter, eleven, and a son, six. She was intelligent and worked in a high level position for a governmental consulting agency. And early on the morning of November 2 she was murdered, the victim of a fatal vehicle fire in the parking lot of her office.

Oh, and there's one more thing you should know about Sheila Curling. She's not a real person. Unless that is, you happened to be one of the students attending the Virginia Fire Marshal Academy's Law Enforcement School for Fire Marshals.

For these 21 men and women, Sheila Curling was the focus of attention during the last week of their training, conducted November 7-10 at Camp Pendleton, Virginia Beach. They had already spent seven demanding weeks that covered topics such as Arrests, Search and Seizure, Evidence, Sex Crimes, Drugs, Firearms, Defensive Tactics, Interview and Interrogation, Courtroom Preparation, Traffic Stops, Surveillance, and Environmental Crimes. Now it was time to bring all that training together.

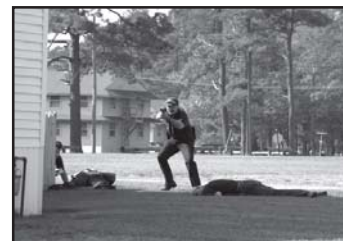
The students began the week working in teams of seven. They were presented the scenario of a fatal vehicle fire. The remnants of the vehicle contained evidentiary items including the corpse of an adult female (who would soon be identified as Sheila Curling), the remnants of a pocketbook, several charred remnants of propaganda material from a group known as the PSB (People Striking Back), remnants of an explosive device, the remnants of a letter from the victim's doctor revealing the results of a pregnancy test, remnants of a "confidential" report on the PSB, a computer disk, an audio cassette labeled DIA/PSB, and remnants of a love letter signed by Sheila.

Over the next four days, under the watchful eyes of the course Instructors and Controllers, the three teams worked diligently documenting the crime scene, requesting laboratory examinations, logging evidence, submitting affidavits for search warrants, performing surveillance operations, and interviewing witnesses and suspects. As the investigation proceeded, a list of suspects began to take shape. Was it the husband, Thomas Curling? One of the members of the PSB, such as Abraham Justice, Big Daddy Johnson, or firearms dealer, Bobby Hammonds? Danielle Steele, owner of the local bar and hangout for the PSB?

All of these leads and more were investigated as the case developed. Meanwhile, the students also had to contend with a variety of role players, including the PSB members and an overzealous reporter from the local news media. The role players added to the stress that the students faced as they worked the case, sometimes taking them down false trails. The challenge was for the students to stay focused on conducting their investigation based on the facts and working together as a team.

According to Gary Bise, one of the instructors and a retired Captain from Henrico County Police Department, "This week is intended to put a certain level of stress on the students. We do things during the scenarios to make them stress out to see if they'll work as a team. Can they work with another investigative unit? That's the way it's designed."

"The biggest challenge for the students this week was trying to figure out who the players were," added Bise. "They're trying to solve a crime with the scenario



Sheila Curling?

Marshals concludes at Camp Pendleton



they're given and once they got through the distractors they were able to conclude it successfully."

Gregory A. Wooldridge of City of Norfolk Fire Rescue was class president during the eight week school. He echoed Bise's comments regarding stress. "This week was very intense," said Wooldridge. "It brought my stress level up as well as everybody else's. It was a good learning experience to get us aware of what we might run into in our job."

"My whole daily activity has changed from just going to a business to do an inspection or ask questions," Wooldridge elaborated. "Now I've been through the Law Enforcement class which has taught us to interact and deal with people in certain situations. We'll be more alert and more ready for a situation. What we went through this week has prepared us for that even though we haven't learned everything. It has at least given us the tools to react in certain situations."

As the week came to an end, the three teams combined into one task force and eventually solved the crime. All that was left was for the tired, but happy students to graduate and return home to their jurisdic-

tions. Graduation was held at Camp Pendleton on Thursday, November 10 with all 21 students successfully completing the course.

The 2005 Graduates of the Law Enforcement School for Fire Marshals are: Mike Armstrong, Rockingham County Fire & Rescue; Joe Bauserman, Frederick County Fire & Rescue; Christopher Barry, Loudoun County Fire & Rescue; Frank Blankenship, Chesterfield County Fire & Rescue; Tony Dennis, County of Henrico Division of Fire; B. Kevin Hayden, Arlington County Fire Department; Richard Krimmer, II, City of Alexandria Fire Department; Rodney Lawson, Campbell County Public Safety; Anne-Marie Loughran, Hampton Fire Rescue; Travis Ludvisgen, Loudoun County Fire & Rescue; Lee Mooney, Hanover County Fire-EMS; Orlando Morris, Richmond Fire; Jeff Neal, Frederick County Fire & Rescue; Tracy Outlaw, City of Portsmouth Fire & Rescue; Joe Powers, County of Henrico Division of Fire; Ron Reingruber, Prince William County Fire & Rescue; Carol Saulnier, Arlington County Fire Department; Billy Thomas, Arlington County Fire Department; Donnie Thompson, Arlington County Fire Department; Marc Waltz, County of Henrico Division of Fire; and Greg Wooldridge, City of Norfolk Fire Rescue.

"This course went extremely well," offered Bise. "Twenty one people came together not knowing each other and they meshed as a team unit. Nobody complained about anything. The students reacted to instruction just about as well as any class we've ever taught.

Their biggest step now is going to be doing their first investigation and doing the first court case and getting prepared for it. We can tell them everything that's going to happen, but going through the frustrations of taking your case to court or having the pleasure of making your arrest and seeing the conviction come out of it . . . that's going to be their first major step."



For these students it's a step they are now ready to take.

So, were you wondering who killed Sheila Curling? Well, if you are a fan of television crime shows then you probably already have a good idea. It was the husband!

General Aviation Firefighting for Structural Fire Fighters

A sixteen hour general aviation firefighting class was held November 19-20 for the Chesapeake Fire Department at the St. Julian's Annex Training Center in Chesapeake, VA.

The class is designed for fire departments that are not tasked with airport fire protection and/or those departments that do not have the specialized tools and equipment associated with Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting.

The class was the idea of Lt. Clarence White, who had attended the first pilot class in Franklin. When he returned to his department he discussed the class with the training staff and his Battalion Chief and they all agreed there was a need for the class. After a meeting with the Battalion Chief and the Airport Manager, the date was set.

The day of the field trip to the airport was busy which allowed the students to observe how hectic even a small airport can be.

Bill Bishop of Bishop Aviation conducted the aircraft familiarization portion, pointing out battery location, fuel levers, and how to get in and out of the aircraft. The students got a good opportunity to look into several aircraft and several hangers.

The final part of the trip was a tour of the airfield that included the fuel farm, fixed base operators, aircraft hangars, and runway and taxiway familiarization.

The second day involved group exercises involving emergencies on and off the airport.

At the end of the class it was decided that the department would ask for the class to be conducted again in the spring for those companies that respond to the Chesapeake Regional Airport.



Bill Bishop (center) conducts an airfield tour for members of the Chesapeake Fire Department.

VDFP FYI

SAFETY/TRAINING TIP

Safety Tip for winter

The first winter storms of ice and snow have arrived. It's time to check the on-spot chains or the regular snow and ice chains so we're sure we can navigate the roads when the next snow/ice storm presents itself in Virginia.

If you have not done so already be sure that the chains are well lubricated and ready for service. Please be sure to check the connection points and make sure that they are all in place.

The on-spot chains should be checked to insure that the manual switch control is working in the cab of the apparatus. Let's be sure that we arrive safely and return to the station safely too.

PUBLIC EDUCATION TIP

Portable heater safety tips

- Space heaters need space. With very few exceptions, home heating devices need a 36-inch clearance from combustibles. In metric terms, this can be rounded up to 1 meter, which is slightly more than 39 inches.

- A portable kerosene heater must be filled only in a well-ventilated area, free of flame and other heat sources, and only when the device has cooled completely. Use only the type of kerosene specified by the manufacturer for that device, and never use gasoline instead of kerosene.

- When turning a heating device on or off, be careful to follow the manufacturer's instructions. When buying heaters, look for devices with automatic shutoff features.

VDFP comes up all ACE's

Receives college credit recommendations for training

Virginia Department of Fire Programs joins a select number of organizations that have added value to their training courses through college credit recommendations as a result of a review conducted on November 30 and December 1, 2005 by the American Council on Education's (ACE) College Credit Recommendation Service.

A team of content specialists, selected from college faculty, has reported that the Virginia Department of Fire Programs courses are comparable to college level courses and may be used as transfer credit at many colleges and universities. Twenty courses were evaluated and recommended for 52 semester hours college credit. In addition, Virginia Department of Fire Programs has been authorized to use one semester hour college credit for each of the Hand-Off Programs of National Fire Academy (NFA) courses they teach. Hand-Off programs are courses developed by NFA, piloted by NFA for one to two years, and then "handed-off" to the states.

According to Jo Ann Robinson, Director, ACE's College Credit Recommendation Service, in over thirty years, ACE has helped thousands of employees earn a college education and has saved employers millions of dollars in tuition reimbursement. She adds, "the continued interest to add value to workplace courses through a third-party review comes as no surprise, especially with the knowledge that superior training increases productivity, with the need to retain good employees as the population ages, and with business and industry concerned about their place in the global market, more and more organizations are turning to the ACE College Credit Recommendation Service to assure the quality of that training.

"We were excited to have ACE review our curricula to determine whether the training courses we offer qualify for college credit recommendation," said Aubrey W. "Buddy" Hyde, Jr., Executive Director of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. "Now that the review has been completed, we couldn't be more thrilled with the outcome. Having 20 of our courses recommended for college credit shows the progress our agency has made to improve higher education for fire and emergency personnel."

"We believe strongly in higher education within the fire and emergency services community. This is great news not only for individuals already working in these disciplines, but also for those who are considering a career in fire and emergency services," added Hyde.

Colleges and universities have also been well served by ACE, because qualified adults from the workforce are continuing or completing their college education in record numbers. According to a recent U.S. Department of Education Study, more than 40 percent of American adults take part in some type of adult learning activity each year—the vast majority for work-related reasons or because they want to earn an academic credential.

Virginia Western Community College has a number of currently employed firefighters working on certificate and associate's degrees, according to Elizabeth Wilmer, Dean of Humanities. "Granting college credit for ACE accredited VDFP courses is a win-win situation for these students. They received quality training while making progress toward their degree goals," Wilmer elaborated.

In addition to the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, Delta Air Lines, Fidelity Investments, FAA, Fire Department of New York City, Leadership Development Center of the Department of Homeland Security, Learning Tree International, McDonalds Corporation, National Fire Academy, Southern California Water Company, Union Pacific Railroad, and Walt Disney World Resort among many others offer ACE college credit-recommended apprenticeship programs or courses.





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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

February

NFA Virginia In-State Weekend
February 4-5, 2006
Collinsville, VA

Annual ARFF Meeting
February 8, 2006
Glen Allen, VA

Heavy & Technical Rescue Team Meeting
February 11-12, 2006
Chesterfield Public Safety Center

Introduction to Unified Command for Major
and Catastrophic Incidents
February 23-24, 2006
Virginia Beach, VA

Virginia Fire Services Board Meeting
February 24-25, 2006
Virginia Beach Convention Center

Virginia Fire Chief's Association Mid-Atlantic Expo
February 23-26, 2006
Virginia Beach Convention Center

Legislative Update

The 2005 Virginia Fire Service Needs Assessment will be released January 13. Updates for this year include.

- New pocket guide (will give condensed version of the most important facts about the fire service in VA in an easy-to-distribute format).
- New how-to-use section will explain how localities can use the report's information.
- Help with interpretation of results available to localities and stakeholder groups through VDFP.
- Expanded executive summary will give key findings of survey.
- Easy-to-read graphs showing trends over time.
- Breakdown of statistics by population size so localities can look up the information that pertains to towns of their size.

Check out <http://www.vafire.com/legislation.htm> for weekly updates on legislation impacting Virginia's fire and emergency services community. For information regarding legislative initiatives, please contact Christy King at 804-371-0220 or christy.king@vdftp.virginia.gov.